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THE AUGUSTAN BOOKS OF
MODERN POETRY

HENRY W. NEVINSON

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Born 1856; *educated Shrewsbury School and Christ Church, Oxford; war correspondent, journalist, and writer of books.*

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The Rose

STEPHEN, clerk of Oxford town,
Oh, the weary while he lies,
Wrapt in his old college gown,
Burning, burning, till he dies!
And 'tis very surely said,
He shall burn when he is dead,
All aflame from foot to head.

Stephen said he knew a rose,
One and two, yea, roses three,
Lovelier far than any those
Which at service-time we see—
Emblems of atonement done,
And of Christ's belovèd One,
And of Mary's mystic Son.

Stephen said his roses grew
All upon a milk-white stem;
Side by side together two,
One a little up from them,
Sweeter than the rose's breath,
Rosy as the sun riseth,
Warm beside—that was his death.

Stephen swore, as God knows well,
Just to touch the topmost bud,
He would give his soul to hell—
Soul and body, bones and blood;
Hell has come before he dies,
Burning, burning, there he lies,
And he neither speaks nor cries.

Oh, what might those roses be?
Once, before the dawn was red,
Did he wander out to see
If the rose were still abed?

Did he find a rose-tree tall
Standing by the silent wall?
Did he touch the rose of all?

"Stephen, was it worth the pain,
Just to touch a breathing rose?"
Ah, to think of it again,
See, he smiles amid his woes!
Did he dream that hell would be
Years hereafter? Now, you see,
Hell is here—and where is she?

At my word, through all his face
Flames the infernal fire within;
Mary, Mary, grant me grace
Still to keep my soul from sin!
Thanks to God, my rose is one
Not so sweet, but all my own,
Not so fair, but mine alone.

The Demoniac

HE knew a devil lurked within,
Like a shy rat it gnawed his heart,
Behind his breast's partition thin
It roamed at will from part to part;
But how to coax the devil out
Defied the village art.

They pounded spiders up with toads,
And mixed them in his special bread;
They pricked him down the street with goads,
And rolled him in the nettle bed;
But at the last they all agreed
He'd not be cured till dead.

He stared upon the unpitying sky,
And slunk about the lonely ways,
Striving to hide from every eye
The torment of his haunted face;
He knew himself a creature loathed
By all the human race.

He knew the sentence on his soul,
From rack to rack condemned to go;
Down an abyss he felt it roll
Of smoke and indistinguished woe;
"What have I done," he asked the winds,
"To be confounded so?"

Each morning, like a poisoned wine,
He drank the memory of his doom;
All day in horror's shadowy mine
He dug the galleries of gloom,
And watched a shapeless thing of dread
Ever before him loom.

There came my lady Rosalie
Bright as a rainbow up the street;
The sun of passion's charity
Shone on her mouth and eyelids sweet;
She was herself a bounteous sun
From her eyes down to her feet.

He caught the border of her dress,
And clinging to her knees did kneel,
He felt her fingers' tenderness
About his maddened forehead steal,
And the devil came sliding out of his mouth
As easily as an eel.

Methinks my lady Rosalie
Is of herself the dull earth's leaven;
Methinks there keeps her company
A pure and healing air from heaven;
One devil from the clown she cast,
And from her lover, seven.

A Shrine

I TOO was born a pilgrim, and have sought
From land to land, by holy reverence led,
The relics of mankind's immortal dead
Resting in shrines elaborately wrought
By kings in adoration, and have brought
Unwonted gifts to many a saintly head
Which lay unnoticed in the common bed
Whose counterpane is grass; but now as nought
I deem such pilgrimages.
Ancient stones
And mouldering sanctitudes! what time for them
When morning, noon, and eve I kneel apart,
Turning to one within whose hallowed bones
Beats, warm with life, that miracle of a heart
Which is my Mecca and Jerusalem?

Southward Bound

NOW the wild-eyed Northern Star
Dances on the horizon's bar,
Dances, rises, vanishes,
And we break the southern seas.

Nameless constellations stand
White above a nameless land;
London—London lies to-night
Set with constellations white.

Murmuring to the swinging tides,
To and fro her river slides;
Down the streams of square and street
Murmuring go the human feet.

Drunk with life the city reels,
Joy is borne on burning wheels,
Lovers come and lovers part,
Lovers waken heart on heart.

Like a flame of lonely fire
Stands the star of my desire;
Longing as I long, she stands;
Empty are her amorous hands.

Both her hands uncomforted
She would lay around my head;
She would give her being whole,
She would give me all her soul.

While the planets go their way,
She would hold me close till day,
Close to her heart she would hold me—
And I sail a southern sea,

And the wild-eyed Northern Star
Dances on the horizon's bar;
Lanterns at the masthead high
Swing across an unhallowed sky.

At Sea

O MOUTH that clung, O little hands!
They took him from my heart,
They stitched him up in sacking bands—
The mouth that clung, the little hands!—
And laid him down apart;
A flag was spread to hide the thing—
The little thing that lived in me—
And words were said and a bell did ring,
They pushed it off into the sea—
The little thing that lived in me.

Oh, white and green and greener still,
He sank into the cold!
Down the ship's side he sank, until—
Oh, white and green and greener still!—
He vanished from my hold;
The night comes on, and mothers bear
The babies to their beds again,
Last night—last night a babe was there
Who knows not hunger now nor pain,
And never goes to bed again.

Cold, cold, and dark, and all alone,
He neither sleeps nor cries—
The life that was my own life's own—
The ship moves on, and all alone
Far, far behind he lies.
Last night he lay against my side—
The mouth that clung, the little hands!—
Down through the dark I see him slide,
Or tossed on cold, unpitying sands—
O mouth that clung, O little hands!

An Empty Box

SURELY the woman of the sinful street
Who pushed her way past many a spotless guest
And washed with tears, and kissed the sacred feet,
And wiped them with her hair, and from her breast

Drew out an alabaster box, and poured
The precious ointment forth, making increase
The indignant voices, till she heard her Lord
Saying, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace"—

Surely at times, long after He was dead,
She took the box out from some hidden place,
And wept, recalling in a fragrance shed
About it still, the very voice and face.

So do I cherish up my heart, as it were
An alabaster box in secret shrine,
Retaining still a fragrance faint and rare
Of love long since poured out at feet of thine.

Death in Life

HERE, by the lifeless wall,
Two souls immortal met;
The sun marched over all,
We cared not when he set;
Love in two souls aflame
Joined flame and flame as one;
—The wall is much the same,
And there's the marching sun.

Quick movements of her dress,
With breathings out and in;
Eyes closed for lovingness,
The touch of skin on skin—
Oh, the first touch, the first
Touch of dear passion's will!
—And of all griefs the worst
Is that we're living still.

Long before living ends,
Alone or on the street
We are like meeting friends,
And happy not to meet;
But that so dear a thing
Should rot before we die
—O Death, here is thy sting!
Here, Grave, thy victory!

A Ballade of Time

"Where is the Life that late I led?"
—*Henry IV*, Part II, Act V, Scene 3.

THEY come not now that came before—
Evening of spring, and blossom white,
The footstep hushed, the whispering door,
The thin form glimmering into sight,
The moon half-seen in clouded night,
One star, and wind, and passing rain,
The smell of lilacs in the lane;
Where is the foot, the lovely head,
My moon that never was to wane?
Where is the life that late I led?

Tossed by the sea from shore to shore,
  Wheeled to the battle's left and right;
In wreck of storm, in wreck of war,
  In tides that clashed, and clashing fight,
When the deep guns out-boomed the might
  Of the deep-booming hurricane,
And like the shriek of ropes astrain,
  The wind wailed with the death that sped
Sheer through the battery's galloping train—
  Where is the life that late I led?

They come not now, they come no more,
  The thoughts that sprang with daily light,
As gems upon an enchanted floor,
  Matching the sun in promise bright;
Even sorrow, too, has taken flight—
  Sorrow and consecrating pain—
And rage comes never here again,
  Pleasure and grief alike are dead;
What fear can move? What hopes remain?
  Where is the life that late I led?

ENVOI.

So should a man recall in vain
  The dreams of a scarce-wakened brain,
Forgotten e'er the sleep is fled,
  And buried down in Time's inane,
Where is the life that late I led.

Pythagoras at Argos

ARRIVED from far, he trod the remembered ways
  Of that grave town where he was wont to be
With heroes old of far-resounding days,
  Gathered for wandering wars of land or sea.

There, crumbling o'er a sculptured tomb he found
The rusted armour he himself did wear,
Battling long since at Troy, and underground
Lay his own body, long since crumbling there.

Even so, in wandering through the haunted nave
Of time's old church, I saw against a stone
A panoply of love, hung o'er a grave
Where lay a rigid body once my own.

Why waste a thought on long-forgotten men,
Or spell the record of those fading lines?
Sweet life is sweeter to me now than then,
And round my heart a nobler armour shines.

At Thirty-five

NOW in the centre of life's arch I stand,
And view its curve descending from to-day;
How brief the road from birth's mysterious strand!
How brief its passage till it close in grey!
Yet by this bridge went all the immortal band,
And the world's saviour did not reach half-way.

Sheep-Shearing

THE shepherd sits like death who takes his toll;
The struggling sheep secure before him lies,
And feels the encumbering fleeces off her roll,
And naked stands at gaze with dubious eyes;
Then rushes forth, like a bewildered soul
Escaping, cool and white, to Paradise.

St. John of Amiens

IN the fair church of Amiens
There lies the relic of St. John;
Some say it is the skull of him
Beheaded, as the Gospels tell,
By Herod for a woman's whim,
What time her daughter danced so well.
(St. John the Baptist, ever blest,
Bring me to his eternal rest.)

But some adore it as the head
Of John Divine, the same who said,
"My little children, love each other,"
And lay upon Lord Jesu's heart,
And took in trust the Blessed Mother,
Till she in glory did depart.
(St. John Divine, the son of love,
Preserve me to his peace above.)

For John the Baptist's head, they say,
Was broken up in Julian's day;
One bit is in Samaria's town,
And two beneath Byzantium's dome,
And Genoa has half the crown,
The nose and forehead rest in Rome.
(St. John the Baptist's scattered dust
Bring me to kingdoms of the just.)

And there are others say again
St. John Divine escaped the pain
Of death's last conflict, for he lies
Still sleeping in his bishopric
Of Ephesus, until his eyes
Shall ope to judgment with the quick.
(St. John Divine, who sleeps so fast,
Wake me to paradise at last.)

For me, a poor unwitting man,
I pray and worship all I can;
Sure that the blessed souls in heaven
Will not be jealous of each other,
And the mistake will be forgiven
If for one saint I love his brother.
(St. John Divine and Baptist too,
Stand at each side whate'er I do.)

And so that dubious mystery
Which of the twain those relics be,
I leave to God; He knows, I wis;
How should a thing like me decide?
And whosesoever skull it is,
St. John, I trow, is satisfied.
(May God, who reads all hearts aright,
Admit my blindness to his sight.)

The Picturesque

THE Abbey Hall is fair to see,
With lawns the smoothest ever trod,
And many a quaint exotic tree
Encompassing the house of God.

A few old arches, open still
At certain hours throughout the week,
Where antiquaries gaze their fill,
And amorous pairs play hide-and-seek.

At luncheon in the aisle they sit,
The painter sets his painting desk;
No place in all the shire so fit
For picnics and the picturesque.

O home of God, of God bereft—
  O modern virtue's counterpart—
Sleek ruins of a conscience left
  To grace the pleasaunce of a heart!

"*Oh, for More Worlds to Conquer!*"

POOR Alexander! was this earth
  Too small in your opinion?
To me was given at my birth
  An infinite dominion.

I've unknown seas, and deserts wide
  With scarcely a trace of fountain;
And fearsome monsters peep and hide
  Along the lengths of mountain.

And every day begins anew
  A strife of cruel ravages,
For every day my Grecian few
  Brave Oriental savages.

So has it been since I was born;
  So lasts till death or longer;
More blest than monarchs, every morn
  I've the same world to conquer.

A Patriot

UP from a radiant valley went the way
  Running between the vines and walnut trees,
And crossed low Alps where peasants raked the hay,
And cow-bells tinkled on the laughing breeze,

And joyful children shouted as they sped
Grass-laden sledges down, till all the air
Resounded joy, and mountains overhead
Seemed in our human mirthfulness to share.

But suddenly I climbed whence I could see
An ocean haze revealing tremulously
Where lies the path to England. Then for me

It seemed as when, submerged in common life,
Some man goes cheerily on from year to year,
Peace in his breast unsanctified by strife,
And placid ease unchastened by a fear;

Till as he passes down a village street,
A Sabbath bell tolls with persistence dim,
He hears the shuffle of church-going feet,
And from the door drones out the dismal hymn;

Where then is peace? The dull repeated strain
Wakes the old serpent of a nobler pain,
And stirs a trouble at the heart again.

Pilgrim's Song

IN days when old Crusaders
Rode to the Holy War,
For every pilgrim sinner
They counted one saint more;
They counted one saint more,
For they wrapped his body round
In the shirt that went to Zion
When they laid him under ground.

I too have been a pilgrim
Beneath a holy sky,
And that's how I'll be buried
Whene'er I come to die;

Whene'er I come to die
And pilgrimages cease,
Oh, bury my pilgrim body
In the shirt that went to Greece!

I stood beside the columns
Of Athene's ruined shrine;
And looked from far at Sparta,
And drank the resined wine;
And drank the resined wine,
And heard the Goat-god speak,
Where the asphodel was growing
And the mother-tongue was Greek.

Dear land, my more than mother,
Receive me to my home!
Count me among thy children,
Though late in time I come;
Though late in time I come,
Give me thy children's peace
When like a saint I'm buried
In the shirt that went to Greece.

In Central Africa

DARK in its channel which the grasses hide,
With living speed through marsh and desert flowing,
Thirty feet deep its waters curl and slide,
Almost without a whisper going.

Quiet things come and lap it with soft tongue,
Footstep by footstep through the silence creeping,
And starry leopards shine its reeds among,
When all but they and stars are sleeping.

It has no name among the streams of earth,
No proud explorer has its bearings given;
Only the sun and moon watched at its birth,
And it has sucked the breasts of heaven.

In peace assured, these perilous lands between,
It will its waters to some deep deliver;
And had I been what I too might have been,
Then had my peace been like a river.

Home, Sweet Home

SWIFTLY in Africa the twilight came
To rocks and wildernesses lone,
Grey mists from lakes without a name
Crept over hills unknown.

The march was done, the camp was set,
The fire was blazing from the ground,
The slaver and the merchant met
Among the goods around.

They bargained with adjustment nice,
Holding commercial balance true;
A man or woman? what the price
Gave each the profit due?

They shared their bread and wine and meat,
They smoked their Portuguese cigars,
And opposite, with feet to feet,
They sang to the gay guitars.

They sang of a city far away,
A river port, a castled wall,
A crowded square at the cool of day—
Ah, that was in Portugal!

They sang of the dance in a summer night,
And marble courts, and acacia trees;
They yearned in singing with sad delight
For a city beyond the seas.

They ended, and through the forest wide
The music passed in lessening waves;
Rousing himself, the slaver cried,
"Here! shackle up the slaves!

"Turn out the dogs, watch all the hills,
Have whips and rifles ready! Come,
Ten dollars to the man who kills
A slave that runs for home!"

Affatim Edi, Bibi, Lusi

I DO not greatly care what may befall
My soul when it shall fade in air;
Whether it live, or live no more at all,
I do not care.

Poor, pallid, gentle, wandering, bloodless thing,
That shivers naked out of sight!
A moth, a lonely seabird on the wing
Has more delight.

But for my body, what shall come of it—
Dear host and comrade of the soul—
I do deplore the destiny unfit,
That graveyard hole.

Oh, the broad chest that broke the swollen wave,
The feet that were so swift to run,
The eyes that threw a light so glad and brave
Back to the sun,

And limbs that learnt of love his utmost worth,
And burning heart that loved so true!
Sweet earth, have pity on a little earth
That pitied you!

The Haunted Spring : 1915

A TROUBLE shakes the rays of dying light,
The troubled earth, tremulous between her poles,
Like a lost angel through the forsaken height
Of heaven calling, down her sad orbit rolls,
And human hearts, unresting day or night,
Vibrate to passing souls;—

To dying souls, to souls that pass in pain,
Or with one crash are scattered on the air;
To souls that, lightening over hill and plain,
Strike at our spirit's portal unaware,
And, crying for response, again, again,
Hold dim communion there.

Vainly we seek the life that once we led,
Pursue the toil, walk the familiar street;
A ghostly movement stirs around our head,
And in our blood those failing pulses beat;
Hid in the covert of the accustomed bed,
We hear the noiseless feet.

Could but a mountain wilderness provide
Some silent cavern of tranquillity!
Could but an undiscovered ocean's tide
Murmur of peace to such as thither flee!
No silence comforts now the mountain side,
No peace the untravelled sea.

No peace, no silence, no delight of spring,
No joy supportable, even if it came!
Flesh of our flesh, their souls go wandering
—Young souls, who took death's hazard as a game,
Our common men, like us in everything,
In sin, in hope, the same.

Winds of the sky upon their faces blew,
  They heard the voice of spring across the guns,
They touched the emerging stream, but never knew
  How in full strength dear life's great river runs:—
Would God, would God that we had died for you,
  Our sons, our lovely sons!

A Cabinet Minister

SOME years ago he started on his course,
Equipt and emulous for the nobler fame;
Aspiring principle, intellectual force,
  And conscience pledged the promise of his name;
Proud was the allegiance that his speeches gave
  To freedom in historic contests won;
But now his soul lies mouldering in the grave,
  And his body goes marching on.

His democratic Party feared his zeal,
  Too grand in aim, in method too benign;
His bosom cherished every mortal's weal,
  Proclaiming peace and charity divine;
Out of the abyss he called on God to save
  Wrecks of the world from wrongs the world had done;
But now his soul lies mouldering in the grave,
  And his body goes marching on.

Behold him soon, live mummy of his past,
  Adept for honours, deaf to honour's call,
To Ministerial seats descending fast,
  While conscious Ministers applaud his fall;
Alas for resolutions doomed to pave
  The infernal surface that he treads upon!
For now his soul lies mouldering in the grave,
  And his body goes marching on.

Colleague of cruelty, mouthing mercy still,
Coercion's helpmate, to coerce afraid,
He murdered freedom half against his will,
And kissed the holiness he had just betrayed;
Endearing enemy, half-reluctant knave,
A cross-bred hypocrite, Pecksniff's bastard son;
For now his soul lies mouldering in the grave,
And his body goes marching on.

Last stage of all: he shares the tyrant's fate,
Sees honour from afar, and knows it lost,
Knocks at the golden door, and knocks too late,
Expelled from glory where he sought it most;
Peace, mercy, justice, resolutions brave,
Love for mankind and freedom—all are gone,
For now his soul lies mouldering in the grave,
And his body goes marching on.

A Vigil

August 2 *to* 3, 1916.

THE summer day is closing like a flower
That has drunk long of sunshine and will sleep
Till dawn renews her splendour. It is the hour
When half the implacably revolving star
Sleeps to recover life. And here I keep
A vigil faithful to one soul afar,
For whom night brings no life-renewing peace,
But while I breathe in vigil, every breath
Hastens the moment when his breath shall cease
In unimaginable death.

Across the street some one, reprieved to pleasure
From labour's prison-house, with windows wide
Diffuses music—solemn music, such
As gods might move to when they move in measure
Through heaven's eternal fields. Hark, at the touch

How themes with themes embracing intertwine
And sweep aloft to soar and march and ride
On wings beyond the storm-clouds, and dispart
To summon new companions and combine
In figures fixed by some eternal art
Before creation! It is the selfsame song
The morning stars sang when they sang together
And shouts of joy harmonious rose among
The eternal sons of God;
But to the exultant strains that last for ever
Unchanged, unfailing, still the moments run,
Like ghosts of soldiers filing down a road
To vanish one by one,
Returning never.

Now in his cell they kindle up a light,
The privilege due to one so soon to die,
That he may sanctify his final night,
Having a lamp to read the Bible by,
God's word eternal, passing not away.
Oh, what has he to learn from God's own book?
Wide as the sunlit heaven his spirit lay—
A sunlit sky through which tumultuous wind
Sweeps the black thunder-cloud and leaves behind
A wide and sunlit sky. For still he took
Into his heart the sorrows of mankind
And heard the silent crying of a wrong
Crying in lonely darkness for the day
His coming heralded. Was any wrath,
Was any angry, and he burned not with flame
Devouring as the sudden lightning's path,
And as the wind which drives the tempest strong?
But from the storm emerging still the same,
Glows the big sun, rejoicing in the race
Among his equal stars,
And on the mountains bends a joyful face
To light the dewdrops of the misty glen

With radiance. Radiant was that spirit born
Which now they cage behind the prison bars
As showmen cage some lion in a den
Far from the forest.
And to-morrow morn
Along this very street newsboys will cry,
"Last moments and death scenes!" for common scorn
To snatch and read and pass. O Thou Most High,
Where is that holiness eternal now
When the last night's quick fingers have begun
To close around that spirit? Thou—dost Thou—
Dost Thou continue holy, O Thou Holy One?

There is a land too dear for a lover's words
Lying beyond the sunset like a dream
In magic slumber, and around her shore
Of cloudy promontories the wandering birds
As spirits of her lovers calling seem
To hang about her still, and evermore
The big waves surge and gulp and surge again
Below the sea-cliffs; changeful mountains run
Encompassing the wilderness of her heart
With purple jewelry and with silver rain,
Whence fan-like rays pour from the hidden sun
To light the rainbow's unexpected gleam
On flying clouds far distant.
Counterpart
Of that enchanted country people find
In all her children, but in him was found
Unchanging passion for her, constant faith,
Unswerving love for all her holy ground,
And steadfastness of the undeviating mind
That leads him now to death.

Darkness and deeper darkness, short-lived night,
Revealing stars and stars and further stars
Beyond capacity of thought or sight,
Innumerable, multitudinous,

Crowded in swarms, and separate by the bars
Of million uncrossed miles, each star a sun
Bursting with huge volcanoes thunderous,
And girt by spinning fragments, like the dust
Flung from a chariot's wheel, and one by one
Moving in isolation with its planets, just
As our own sun, a child among the stars,
Moves with the dust-speck of our troublous earth,
Sliding through infinite darkness, none knows where,
Nor knows if all the suns of the visible sky
Light but one little hall in starry space
Of universe after universe.
Oh, what worth
Is man or life—one little life? What care
In all that firmament whether he live or die?
What hope, what love avails before the face
Of burning worlds in station? Or what prayer?

Quick blood is moving in the brave heart still;
It throbs in pulses to the hands and feet,
Ceaselessly leaping in live jets that fill
With life the muslin network of the flesh,
The sacred web where soul and substance meet,
Mysterious, passing knowledge, with a mesh
Of wonder interwoven till it works
In perfect function; limbs obey the call
Of lightning riders racing to and fro,
Silent, invisible, carrying the commands
Of a dominant thing unknown, that somewhere lurks
Silent, invisible, hidden apart from all,
But interfused and intermingled so
That while they live secure, secure it stands,
And if they suffer, suffering too it lies,
And if they die, it dies.

How many beats has now that heart to make?
They might be counted—so many to go

To every minute of the shortening hours.
Few the commands those riders now will take
Till their last order bids the feet to tread
Slowly behind in that procession slow
A priest leads thither where the infernal powers
Will stop the blood from running, stop the heart,
Quench lighted eyes, shut the ears' listening,
Silence the voice, break short the woven thread,
Chill the warm limbs, strike rigid every part,
Slay all that miracle of a living thing,
Till that itself is dead
Which dwelt in secret, but in flesh revealed,
A furnace blazing with an unseen flame,
Lighting the world, and in itself concealed,
Known among men, itself without a name,
Sleepless by day, sleepless in dreams by night,
So endless seeming, and yet thus to end,
That secret thing, that fire, that life, that light,
My friend!

The chamber walls around me stealthily
Glimmer like ghosts in grey;
Bookshelves and tables slowly re-appear,
Like ghosts emerging, and the northern sky
Turns pale in darkness; streets and houses near
Show brown already; for the dawn is here,
And it is now to-day.

They set about it now. Like ghosts they creep
From court to court inside the prison gate
To boil the coffee, make the breakfast ready,
Knock up the drowsy hangman from his sleep;
He sees the rope is right, the scaffold steady,
Drives in a nail and rectifies a plank,
Grumbling he's up too soon and has to wait.
But in the cell lies one who needs no waking;
He watches too the walls grow white and blank;

The final light, the light of death is breaking;
Never again shall he behold the day
Steal through the sightless window, nor again
Hear the familiar jangle of the keys
As warders tramp those metal passages
Which he shall tread fast bound as with a chain—
Pinioned they call it, like a wild bird trapped
And wild wings mutilated.
Far away
This very dawn steals down a mountain side
Below the summit sleeping still enwrapped
In unmoved clouds of quietude and night,
And brings a cool grey back to lichened rocks,
And brown to the sodden turf, and to each flower
Yellow for scented broom, and a ruddy glow
For heather, where the bees are now awake;
Now on the shore the slow-descending light
Touches the whitening ripples as they break
In bubbles against the sand with the flowing tide,
And rouses wild birds up in whitening flocks
Of crying terns and Solan geese that go
Through the clear air of this same morning hour
Swooping and plunging.
In the whitewashed cell
Does any vision of that distant home,
Abiding constant there, unchanging, rise
As, living still, with death close to his eyes,
He hears the lawful instruments of hell
Approaching, for the end has come?

And now remains the unconquerable will,
The soul untamed, defiant to the death,
The life's example, calling to us still
To stand untamed, unconquered, and defy
Legalized murderers, spewing poisonous breath,
Successful ghouls of purchased infamy,
Life's prostitutes, suckers of noble blood,

And freedom's hypocrites whose zeal is spent
In praising distant freedom; cultured minds
Of careful ease that pass and wag the head;
The impenetrable shoals of dull content
Entombed in custom as blind eels in mud;
Habituated sluggards, torpid kinds
Of worm in their own torpor comforted;
And all the Might, Dominion, Majesty,
Thrones, Principalities, and Kingly Powers,
Rejoicing now he is dead.

That still remains, and this beside is ours:
To covet no reward of worldly state;
To live indifferent to the public hate;
Nor drink the alluring opiate of a home;
Yield to no love, consort with never a friend
Save only such as will espouse for fate
The losing battle and the inglorious end,
Or with insatiable desire will roam
Ever confronting wave beyond the wave
Recurrent o'er the wastes of trackless foam;
Like those hard mariners who, rejecting ease
With wives and goatherds in the sheltered peace
Of long-sought Ithaca, conspired to save
From brute extinction that eternal spark
Which burned for action's knowledge, and beheld
Strange stars above a world where no man dwelled,
And beat the encircling ocean till they found
One great brown mountain, where the lonely bark,
Struck by an evil wind, turned three times round,
And at the fourth plunged to her lonely grave,
Untraced, unfathomable, dark,
Upon the abysmal ground.

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